

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: ServeMinnesota Action Network

Application ID: 14AC156065

Program Name: Minnesota Math Corps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant provides relevant data supporting the need for 200 AmeriCorps members to provide evidence-based intervention in core mathematical skills to 5,000 students in grades 4 through 8 in 180 schools across Minnesota.

The applicant states that 42% of 4th graders and 35% of 8th graders are not proficient in Mathematics according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The applicant states that 58%-65% of middle school students do not have the mathematical skills necessary to succeed in higher level mathematics courses for high school graduation, post-secondary education and 21st century careers.

The Minnesota Department of Education reports declining mathematical proficiency skills from grade to grade across the state.

The applicant documents an achievement gap in mathematics, particularly in urban school districts with high percentages of minority students.

The application includes diverse relevant data from multiple sources to support the need for math support for K-12 students in order to prepare them for both academic and life success.

The applicant cites data that is specific to the target group for the project.

The applicant cites data that is current (last year's standardized tests) to successfully document the need and severity of the issue in the target group.

The application provides sufficient information to support how the program's planned interventions will complement

the schools' existing math curricula and align to both educational standards (e.g., state and Common Core) and evidence-based recommendations for math intervention in order to fulfill the goals of the program.

The application describes how the program will further extend the instructional capacity of schools by having each AmeriCorps member train and supervise at least five volunteers to assist students.

AmeriCorps members will deliver scripted Math Corps interventions based on research and best practices.

Data is used weekly to provide individualized lesson planning for AmeriCorps members to deliver.

Each AmeriCorps member recruits, trains, and supervises five volunteers to provide instruction in fact fluency.

The applicant describes an intervention that aligns with research and the schools' existing state educational standards.

The applicant describes a measurement tool called the AIMSweb Math Computation assessment, which will be used to determine baselines and then the progress of targeted students.

The project enrolled 100% Members in the previous grant period and retained 87% in the last program year. The explanation of Members leaving to accept excellent job offers is reasonable and their solution of initiating a commitment of one year during the recruitment process is strong.

The applicant states they exceeded performance targets for the number of students served in the last project but only 81% of the students met individual growth targets. The applicant has identified two potential reasons and is correcting both in the current year and proposed project.

The applicant provides information and data to demonstrate that they have been able to increase the number of students meeting growth targets by 60%.

The applicant indicates that last year's program revealed that students needed assistance with math vocabulary and that approximately 40% of the students were not reading at grade level; this year, the AmeriCorps members will add vocabulary development to the curriculum.

The applicant presents compelling evidence that it has provided a program that impacts the mathematics achievement of children in grades 4 through 8 and has had a 100% enrollment rate and an 87% retention rate in its past program.

The applicant has demonstrated a history of performance success with increases in the number of targeted students receiving Math Corps interventions for at least 20 weeks by 60%.

The applicant states that it increased the number of students meeting growth targets by 29%.

The applicant states that 81% of students exceeded their individual growth targets, falling below the anticipated growth rate which, after investigation, led to program improvements consisting of an internal coach to monitor scheduling and ensuring students receive proper dosage and additional assistance in mathematical vocabulary.

The applicant states it has consistently met compliance requirements since 2008.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states the project's Members will use "scripted Math Corps interventions" but fails to describe enough detail about the interventions, including no cited studies.